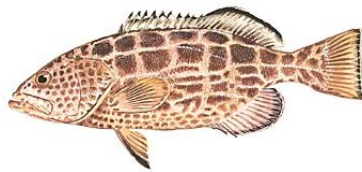
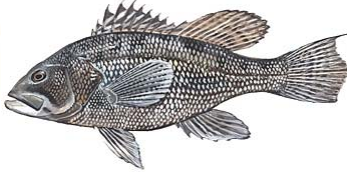


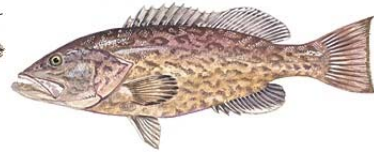
South Atlantic
Snapper-Grouper Amendment 17B
Frequently Asked Questions December 2010



Black grouper



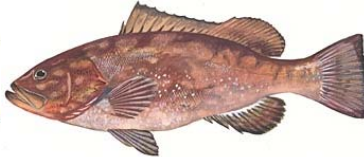
Black Sea Bass



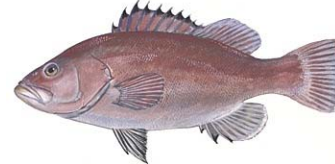
Gag



Golden Tilefish



Red Grouper



Snowy Grouper



Vermilion Snapper



Speckled Hind



Warsaw Grouper

What is Amendment 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region?

- Amendment 17B establishes annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) for black grouper, black sea bass, gag, golden tilefish, red grouper, snowy grouper, vermillion snapper, speckled hind, and warsaw grouper.
 - An ACL is the level of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that if met or exceeded triggers some corrective action, such as a seasonal closure or a quota closure. ACLs are set at levels that prevent overfishing from occurring.
 - AMs are management controls to prevent ACLs from being exceeded, and to correct overages of ACLs if they occur.
- The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires fishery managers specify these parameters for species undergoing overfishing by 2010. *Note: a new assessment was completed for black grouper in 2010. The assessment indicates black grouper is not undergoing overfishing; however, this determination was made after Amendment 17B had been submitted for Secretarial approval by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council). Therefore, even though black grouper is no longer considered to be undergoing overfishing, actions affecting black grouper were retained in Amendment 17B.
- Amendment 17B also proposes new management measures for speckled hind, warsaw grouper, and snowy grouper, which include a prohibition on harvest of six deepwater snapper-grouper species beyond 240 feet (73 m). The table below

outlines the ACLs, AMs, and management measures for each species addressed in Amendment 17B.

- In addition to establishing ACLs and AMs, Amendment 17B allocates the golden tilefish total allowable catch between the commercial and recreational sectors, based on the following formula: (50% * average of long catch range (lbs) 1986-2008) + (50% * average of recent catch trend (lbs) 2006-2008). The allocation would be 97% commercial and 3% recreational. This allocation is based on short-term and long-term landings histories.
- Amendment 17B also updates the current framework procedure for snapper-grouper to include ACLs, annual catch targets, and AMs so these parameters may be more easily modified in the future.

Species	ACL	AM	Management Measures
Speckled Hind and Warsaw Grouper	Zero (landed catch only)	Year-round closure no directed harvest allowed.	Prohibition on harvest of snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper beyond a depth of 240 feet (40 fathoms; 73 m).
Golden Tilefish	<u>Commercial</u> = 282,819 lbs gw <u>Recreational</u> = 1,578 fish, or 8,747 lbs gw	<u>Commercial</u> - fishery closed when ACL is projected to be met. <u>Recreational</u> - following fishing season shortened if ACL is exceeded based on a three year running average of landings.	No new management measures. Current trip and bag limits apply.
Snowy Grouper	<u>Commercial</u> = 82,900 lbs gw <u>Recreational</u> = 523 fish	<u>Commercial</u> - fishery closed when ACL is projected to be met. <u>Recreational</u> - following fishing season shortened if ACL is exceeded based on a three year running average of landings.	Establish a recreational daily bag limit of 1 snowy grouper <i>per vessel</i> per day.
Black Sea Bass	<u>Commercial</u> = 309,000 lbs gw <u>Recreational</u> = 409,000 lbs gw	<u>Commercial</u> - fishery closed when ACL is projected to be met. <u>Recreational</u> - if black sea bass are overfished and the ACL is projected to be reached, the recreational fishery would be closed. If the ACL is exceeded based on a three year running average of landings reduce the sector ACL in the following year by the amount of the overage.	No new management measures. Current bag and limits apply.
Gag	<u>Commercial</u> = 352,940 lbs gw <u>Recreational</u> = 340,060 lbs gw	<u>Commercial</u> - prohibit commercial harvest of shallow water groupers when the ACL is projected to be met. <u>Recreational</u> - if gag are overfished and the ACL is projected to be reached, the recreational fishery would be closed. If the ACL is exceeded based on a three year running average of landings reduce the sector ACL in the following year by the amount of the overage.	No new management measures. Current bag and size limits apply.
Gag, Red Grouper, Black Grouper	<u>Commercial group ACL</u> = 662,403 lbs gw <u>Recreational group ACL</u> = 648,663 lbs gw	<u>Commercial</u> - prohibit the commercial possession of shallow water groupers when the gag, black grouper, and red grouper ACL is projected to be met. <u>Recreational</u> - if (gag, red grouper, or black grouper) are overfished and the sector ACL is projected to be met, the recreational fishery would be closed. If the ACL is exceeded reduce the sector ACL in the following year based on a three year running average of recreational	No new management measures. Current bag and size limits apply.

		landings.	
Vermilion Snapper	<u>Commercial</u> = 315,523 lbs gw (January – June) and 302,523 lbs gw (July –December) <u>Recreational</u> = 307,315 lbs gw	<u>Commercial</u> - close fishery when the ACL is projected to be met. <u>Recreational</u> - if vermilion snapper are overfished and the ACL is projected to be reached, the recreational fishery would be closed. If ACL is exceeded based on a three year running average of landings reduce the sector ACL in the following year by the amount of the overage.	No new management measures. Current bag and size limits apply.

Who would Amendment 17B affect?

- Regulations for Amendment 17B apply to fishermen holding a commercial South Atlantic Limited Access Snapper-Grouper Permit, and/or a South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permit for Snapper-Grouper regardless of whether the subject fish are harvested in state or federal waters.
- Total harvest prohibitions, bag limits, size limits, and time/areas closures also apply to private recreational fishermen in federal waters of the South Atlantic.

Where would Amendment 17B regulations be effective?

- Amendment 17B applies to federal waters off the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and the east coast of Florida (ranging from 3 to 200 miles offshore of each state), and in state waters for vessels having any type of federal snapper-grouper permit. Each state has the option to implement compatible regulations in state waters. The Council would request these states adopt compatible regulations.

When is Amendment 17B going to be implemented?

- On March 30, 2010, the Council submitted Amendment 17B to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation.
- Amendment 17B will become effective on January 31, 2011.

What are the details surrounding the Council's decision to re-visit the deepwater area closure in another amendment?

- At their December 2010 meeting, the Council was presented with new anecdotal information that suggests blueline tilefish can be harvested north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, where the a large portion of blueline tilefish are harvested, without incidentally capturing speckled hind and warsaw grouper.
- The Council felt this new information, should be analyzed through a regulatory amendment that would re-evaluate the deepwater snapper-grouper closure and determine if there are more effective measures to reduce bycatch mortality of speckled hind and warsaw grouper.

Where can I find more information on ACLs and AMs?

- To find out more about Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements for ACLs go to the following Web page:
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2007/docs/qanda_072809.pdf

How can I get more information and/or a copy of Amendment 17B?

- More information on snapper-grouper regulations may be obtained via the Web at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov> or <http://www.safmc.net>.
- Hardcopies of the most recent version of Amendment 17B and environmental assessment may be requested from:

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Phone (843) 571-4366
toll free (866) SAFMC-10
Fax (843) 769-4520

Or:

NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office
Office of Sustainable Fisheries c/o Kate Michie
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505

Phone (727) 824-5305
Fax: (727) 824-5308